

Black Feathers

by Watashi wa Ame desu

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Summary: The Eight Dogs of the East just started searching for the missing bead which brought Shino and the rest a headache when another problem came. Shino's Murasame, a demon who kept him healthy and alive though his time froze, has gone missing. Without Murasame, what would happen to Shino if they couldn't find him on time and will they ever find the missing bead?

1. Chapter 1

Hello everyone! This is cheater boy- A, your author of this story.

This isn't my first fan fiction, however, this is my first under Hakkenden: Eight Dogs of the East. I hope you will like this so far. I am not too familiar with this anime, but I like it so much. So, if you find anything wrong, please do tell me.

Thank you for clicking the story.

Please enjoy the show.

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><p>Chapter One: The Night Before

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><p>It has been two weeks since the day Sousuke's bead got stolen by some creature, and yet Shino, along with the rest of the Eight Dogs of the East, had not found any clues of its whereabouts. He knew Ao had the bead of Duty, however, there was no any progress even with the help of Kaede, who can sense them.<p>

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"Where do you think we should look first?" Kabungo asked all of them as he rested his chin on his palm and sighed. The eight of them were in the one of the rooms at the Konaya's inn where they usually talk.

"I don't know. I haven't any clue at all." Shino answered. His fists, which rested on his lap, clenched the fabric of his shorts and gritted his teeth. His golden green eyes glared at them as his brows furrowed.

"Don't worry, Shino. We'll find it soon." Genpachi reassured him. He smiled genuinely and looked at the purple haired boy, who looked back at him, with soft eyes and his hand wrapped Shino's.

Kabungo cringed at the sight. How his brother could show that side of him? "Aniki! He IS a guy!" clutching his head, he exclaimed, but his brother seemed to hear nothing as he still held Shino's hands who was feeling awkward.

"Genpachi is right since the beads had gathered around you without us noticing it until then." Sousuke said.

"Well, let's call it a day for now. It is getting dark already. Why don't we continue our search tomorrow?" Keno suggested.

"But where?" Dousetsu asked.

"I dunno, maybe at the northern region? Since it is clear that the bead wasn't here."

Everyone nodded.

"Now that's settled, we are going back to the mansion now." closing his eyes as he said this, Shino stretched his arms upward and yawned.

"We're going then." Sousuke said.

"Alright." they chorused.

"Take care, Shino, Sousuke." Shinobu smiled.

"Yeah." the purple haired boy replied with a smile and with that, he and Sousuke went off.

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The two, Shino and Sousuke, silently walked back to the manor side by side. They passed by the stalls in which they stopped occasionally, taking a look at the products while on it. Sometimes Shino would nag Sousuke to buy him some meat buns and mitarashi dangos, but Shino would reprimand him about eating those before dinner; however, he gave up and bought him in one condition though.

"One meat bun would be enough."

"But I want four!" Shino whined.

"One."

"Four."

"ONE."

"I said FOUR."

"Two, then."

"...fou-"

"Two and THAT'S final." Sousuke said firmly who received a scowl from Shino.

"Fine..." he mumbled.

Sousuke asked Shino to stay while he went back to where the meat buns were. It didn't took him too long since it wasn't that far, but it took him 30 minutes to get what he want since the last of the fourth batch of the buns were sold out.

"Sorry for the wait, sir." the young lady apologized as she handed him a bag of two buns.

"It's alright, thanks." Sousuke took the buns and paid for it. He knew Shino was getting impatient and so he rushed back to where he was waiting.

"Shino! Sorry I'm la-" he cut off and almost drop the newly cook buns when he saw Shino unconscious.

"Shino!" he dropped on his knees, sat the buns aside, and held Shino on his laps. "Shino, wake up! What happened?" he shook the boy and tapped his cheeks, but he didn't respond at all, not even a twitch. Finding it useless, he placed the on his back, picked the buns, and run as fast as his human form could back to the mansion.

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At the Four Sacred Beasts' Mansion, in the room both Shino and Sousuke shared lied a boy on one of the two beds under the white blanket. At the left side of the bed, there stood three young men and five foxes.

"What happened to little Shi?" Kaname asked, arms were folded against his chest.

"I have no idea. I just left him to buy him the buns and when I came back he was lying on his stomach, unconscious. ...I shouldn't leave him. I'm sorry."

"It's okay. It seems nothing bad had happen to him, hopefully. Let's just let him rest and ask him when he wakes up." Satomi said. He then turned his back and made his way out of the room to the dining room.

"Come on, Sousuke. Food is waiting."

"Right."

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Bright sun shone, bathing the earth in sunshine, washing the darkness away, and waking the sleeping heads to start the day bright.

At the mansion where the members of Four Sacred Beasts inhabited, the boy with purple hair stirred in his sleep as the light rays hit his face. He turned his back on it so he won't face the light and continued on his slumber because he didn't feel like waking up soon and wasn't planning on waking up later. That was until the door to his room creaked open and entered a young man with short dark hair and kind, soft blue eyes.

"Shino." He called softly as he sat on the edge of the bed. "Time to wake up."

"Mm-mm." the boy, Shino, mumbled upon tucking his head in blanket. "Let me sleep more, Sou" he pleaded drowsily.

Sousuke sighed. "I came here an hour ago and tried to wake you up, but you didn't."

"What time is it?"

"Pass nine in the morning."

" "

Silence overtook the both for a second or two before Shino bolted up, tossing the blanket away, and jumped out the bed in which he stumble on the blanket he just tossed and fell down the floor. Face first.

"Owwâ€|" he muttered.

"Shino! Are you alright?" worried, Sousuke crouched to his side and helped him sat.

"I'm okay. Just a little dizzy." Rubbing his sore face, he said.

"That's what you get, bolting up so suddenly."

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Shino's breakfast didn't end well in his part seeing that Satomi ordered him to not to eat too much, make it fast, and to see him in his office where he does his paper works in fifteen minutes. Being the stubborn, he wanted to eat a lot of meat and take his time in eating, however, Sousuke was there to make sure he eats whatever was served for him, which was full of greens and liver that Shino loathed so much he would faint, and to not to eat too much. Furthermore, Kaname was also there who reminded him that Satomi would cut his allowance once more if he didn't oblige. And so, he grudgingly followed the others and went up to where Satomi was.

"So, can you tell what happened to you last night?" behind his desk, Satomi asked as he eyed his charge. He then propped his elbows on the table, intertwined his fingers together and rested his chin on it, waiting for an answer.

"Lastâ€|night?" Shino, who stood in front of him, repeated as if he wasn't sure.

"Yeah, last night Sousuke bought you back here unconscious." Kaname, who was behind him sitting on the couch with a book on his lap, answered for Satomi.

Shino looked over his shoulder to see Kaname reading the book with a smile gracing his face then back to Satomi, confusion etched on him. "â€|Iâ€|don't know. I don't rememberâ€|" he trailed off, clutching his head which begun to pound.

"What do you mean?" Satomi asked, furrowing his brows.

"I meanâ€|last night. Last night I was withâ€|Sousuke and the others at the Konaya. Thenâ€|thenâ€|" he stuttered.

"Thenâ€¦?"

Shino didn't recall what happened next and to force himself to remember, his head started to ache until it was unbearable. It hurt him so much that he had to clutch his head and shut his eyes close. As the pain kept on growing, Shino bent down until he was on his knees. This occurrence bought Satomi's and Kaname's attention. They rushed to his side and tried to figure out what was wrong with him.

"Shino, are you okay?" worried, Satomi asked.

"Of course he isn't look, Rio. Look, he is in pain." Kaname said sarcastically.

Shino couldn't decipher who were the people with him, though he knew he was with Satomi and Kaname, since his vision blurred at the moment. His head really hurt so much that he past out due to unbearable pain he was feeling.

"Shino!" was what he last heard before passing out.

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><p>Thanks for reading. Please review, tell me how was the chapter.

I'm looking forward to it!

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#CBA

2. Chapter 2

Chapter Two: Murasame's Missing

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><p>For someone who knew Shino, it was quite like a routine for him to go to the Konaya's inn where he would have his breakfast sometimes. If there was something troubling him, he would sat by the pond and stared on his own reflection as the Koi swam here and there. When he has nothing to do he would either stay in there or ask Satomi to give him his allowance so he could wander around the town and buy some curry buns. Whenever they have a meeting he was always the one, aside from the demon brothers and Keno who seemed to stay there, who would arrive first together with Sousuke. However, it was already noon and Shino and Sousuke had yet to arrive.<p>

"What's taking them so long?" chin on his palm and tapping on the table, Kabungo grumbled under his breath.

"He always comes here on time, right?" Daikaku said as he closed his eyes upon folding his arms.

"Maybe he overslept? Since he is still growing." Dousetsu guessed, adjusting his glasses.

"You're right. He is just like a cat, eat, play, and sleep..." Keno huffed.

"But we are not just talking about Shino. What about Sousuke? He is probably done with his errands if there is." Shinobu pointed out and everyone fell silent for a moment until Shinobu spoke. "Do you think there's something bad happened to them?"

"Hmm...Shino has Murasame and Sousuke is with him, I think, so they would be fine-" Keno said thoughtfully, a hand holding his chin as he looked up while the other was supporting his elbow. "-unless...there really is something wrong."

"Then, he would just send Murasame to inform us, no?" said Kabungo.

"He might have gotten himself killed again and Murasame has gone berserk and Sousuke couldn't handle it by himself." Daikaku said his thoughts aloud.

"Ehhh...!? No way!" worried for his friend, Shinobu exclaimed as he slammed the table and stood abruptly.

"Isn't that a bit too much?" Dousetsu asked, feeling a sweat rolled down his cheek.

"What are you imagining, Daikaku? Satomi and Kaname are there. And, if anything is wrong they would send the fox or something to tell us." Kabungo elaborated.

Genpachi, who was silent all the time, felt like their voices were drowned by his own thoughts as he, too, was worried. His instinct was telling him that something was not right. Fed up with the nonsense guesses of his fellow warrior, he made up his mind to go to the mansion where the Four Sacred Beasts live.

"Ah, aniki, where are you going?" Kabungo asked when he noticed Genpanchi stood and was about to walk out.

"I'm going to see them. There is no point discussing these trivial things." he replied without looking back and opened the door.

"W-wait! I'm coming!" Kabungo scrambled up and rushed outside.

"Me, too!" Shinobu seconded followed by the rest.

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"How are you feeling?" standing by the bed with Kaname while Sousuke gave him a glass of water, Satomi asked.

"I'm fine now." Shino replied after gulping the water and gave the glass back to Sousuke who placed it on the tray he was carrying and settled it on the night stand.

"You got us worried Shi-chan. What happened anyway?" asked Kaname.

"I passed out?" he said sarcastically and Sousuke sighed as he sat at the edge of the bed.

"I know, right...?" Kaname said.

"Last night...do you not remember what happened before you collapsed?" Sousuke asked worriedly.

"...No..." Shino replied thoughtfully, head casted down. "Ah! Have you seen Murasame?" snapping his head upwards, he asked.

This question brought Satomi's and Sousuke's frown and Kaname blinked, confused.

"What are you talking about? Did you let him out?" Kaname asked.

"No, I did not. When I woke up this morning he wasn't in me."

Silence engulfed the four as they thought of anything that would explain them why Murasame was not around. The crow never left Shino's side unless he was told to and he would return immediately.

"Maybe it has something to do about last night when you collapsed." Sousuke guessed.

"That is not impossible." said Satomi.

"Then, what will happen to Shi- chan if Murasame won't return?" both Satomi and Kaname did not know the effects in Shino's body of not having Murasame for a long period, so Kaname asked.

Shino's brow furrowed as he recall the time when he ordered the crow to ran an errand and returned late. Sousuke was worried sick at him that time and he don't like it to happen again. Not this time.

"...Shino's body will..." Sousuke trailed off and was not able to continue because a knock on the door was heard.

"What is it?" Kaname asked as he made his way to the door and opened it to see one of his five foxes.

"We have visitors. They are waiting in the lounge."

"Visitors? I hope it is not Lord Finnegan." he prayed.

"Nope. They are Shino's and Sousuke's friends."

"Oh, I forgot. We are supposed to discuss some things regarding to our search for the missing bead. Come on Sou, let's meet them." Shino

said and hopped out of bed, pulling Sousuke out of the room.

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"WHAAAT!?" six of the eight warriors exclaimed when Shino explained why he did not come to meet them, but their shock was directed at the missing Murasame.

"You heard him right." on a comfy chair sat Sousuke.

"What the hell is going on?" Kabungo asked to no one in particular.

"Why are you still alive? Will you not die if he is not with you?" curious, Dousetsu asked the youngest of them.

"Well, I'm not like you. As you know I can send Murasame away." Shino answered.

"How did he disappeared?" Genpachi asked.

"...er... I don't know... I just woke up and he's gone."

Keno sighed, rubbing his temple. "We are missing Sousuke's bead and now Shino's Murasame. Anyway, let us search for the bead first at the North then once we find it we can look for Murasame. That is if he won't come back sooner."

"No." Sousuke deadpanned, shadow covered his eyes. All gazes landed on him, surprised at his sudden reaction.

"What do you mean?" Daikaku asked.

"We have to find Murasame first. The bead can wait." he said.

"What!? You expect us to do that? Last time when your bead got stolen you almost disappeared! You will die without the bead!" Kabungo protested as he stood.

"You...you don't understand."

"Then let us understand, Sousuke. Tell us what we don't understand." Keno ordered.

"...Shino... Shino's body will..." he trailed off, worried that Shino had not spoken for a while. He knew the boy always avoiding the topic, but he can't avoid it now. Sousuke glanced at Shino with brows furrowed. Shino noticed this slight movement and looked up at him with a smile, and then he turned his head towards his friends with defiant eyes.

"I used to be sickly." Shino started. "I have a frail body since birth and wouldn't be able to reach adulthood. Heck, the doctor said I only have one to two years left. Well, that was five years ago. I'm eighteen in case you don't know."

"..." everyone, except Kabungo, stared at him in disbelief. "No way..." they breathed.

"Then that means we are alike." Shinobu proclaimed.

"A bit. But, you are growing normally since you were found while I am stuck in this body for five years."

"You told me the doctor said you won't reach adulthood, but you never said you only have one to two years left." Sousuke said menacingly as he glared at Shino's direction. Shino paled at this.

"So-sorry. I forgot to mention it. A-anyway... Without Murasame by my side for a long period of time will weaken my body to the point I will puke blood and it is not always a good thing to lose too much of blood because Murasame will be in a bad mood again."

"We just have to find him before your body weakens, right?" Genpachi asked and he nodded.

"Then what are we slacking for? Let's go look for that crow." Dousetsu said as he stood.

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><p>Thank you for reading. I hope you like it.

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3. Chapter 3

****Chapter Three: Start of Search****

Shino and his friends went upstairs to Satomi's and asked permission to look for Murasame. Satomi granted them that, but on one condition and that was Shino must not go with them. Shino protested at the condition given. He insisted that he should go with them because Murasame was his responsibility and because he was the one who lost the crow. But, Satomi's word was certain. He said no and that was final.

"Murasame's missing for more than twelve hours. I'm surprised that you still have the strength to stand here." Satomi said leaning his back on his chair.

"Yes, that's right. So please, Satomi. Let me go with them." Shino pleaded.

Satomi sighed. He knew how stubborn his charge was. "I guess I don't have a choice." he said standing up.

"Really?!"

"Of course, no." Satomi reached out to Shino and waved his hand. The boy felt his remaining strength slipped away. His knees buckled and Satomi caught him before he hit his head at the edge of the desk Satomi used. "Sousuke, bring him to his room. After that you can go and search for Murasame." Satomi ordered and they all nodded.

Everyone filed out of the room and of the manor except Sousuke who carried the unconscious Shino and Genpachi who tagged along. Keno, the last one who walked out of the room, noticed that Genpachi split with them, and so he asked, "Where are you going, Genpachi?"

"I'm going with Shino." Genpachi replied dejectedly and without looking back as he walked farther from the group.

Kabungo, who heard the short exchange together with the rest of them, panicked as the thought of his brother together with his ideal woman though Shino was a guy. "What? Aniki, you can't!"

Genpachi halted his pace and turned around to look at them. Sousuke also stopped and turned, curiosity etched on his face.

"Why not?"

"B- because... Aniki... Sousuke will be there for Shino and... I... We need your help for the search, you know."

"True, but Sousuke is the one who knew where Shino collapsed last night and we need someone to be there for Shino when he wakes up."

What Genpachi said was true and everyone but Kabungo agreed on this.

"No! No! You can't!"

"Why?" they asked Kabungo in unison. At that, the youngest of two demons struggled for valid and acceptable reason.

"B-because... Uhm... Ah, the foxes can take care of Shino then we can go."

"But, I saw them out not long ago." Shinobu said.

"Really? Th-then Kaname will do it."

"I saw him out also saying he will meet with Dousetsu's sister and help her shopping." Daikaku said dejectedly.

"What about Satomi?"

"He will leave after ten minutes. He has a meeting to attend." Sousuke said.

"..." Kabungo had run out of options.

"Well, we don't have a choice then. I'll be the one to take care of Shino." Genpachi said. He was about to turn his back when his younger

brother pulled him back and desperately insisted that he will do it. Genpachi protested. He said there was nothing wrong if he will take care of the boy. Keno thought that Kabungo was jealous of Shino, so he teased the youngest of the siblings who in return yelled at him. Dousetsu jumped in that moment scolding them for being so loud. Shinobu also joined the group trying his best to calm the paranoid Kabungo while Sousuke just watched at the sideline and sighed at his friends' antics.

Inside, Satomi rubbed his temples feeling an oncoming headache. He heard all the ruckus that was happening just outside of his room. He had a meeting later, his paperworks were yet to be done, did not sleep well because he was worried of Shino, and now those noises that polluted the stillness of place made his day worse. "Haah... I've had enough of this!" he hissed. He then stood abruptly and rushed outside.

"What's the meaning of this?!" Satomi asked the now stunned and frozen males.

"Uhhh..." Sousuke trailed off.

"Speak." Satomi ordered.

"Genpachi wanted to take care of Shino in my place since I knew where Shino collapsed last night, but Kabungo won't let him." Sousuke answered.

"Just let Genpachi and go."

"But, Aniki-"

"No buts. Just do as I say." with that Satomi said they could not opposed, and so they followed.

Genpachi walked side by side with Sousuke who had Shino on his arms to his room while the rest dragged the pouting Kabungo.

Sousuke had instructed Genpachi where the kitchen was in case Shino would ask for something to eat or drink and the medicines in case Shino is unwell before he left.

Genpachi thanked him and sat at the edge of the bed where the boy rested. He watched the boy's sleeping face and caressed his soft cheek gently.

His pale... He noticed.

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Sousuke led the group to the place. Starting from there they split in three groups. Shinobu and Sousuke traced back to Konaya's inn,

Dousetsu and Kabungo looked to the other side, and Daikaku and Keno adjacent to them.

"Do you have an idea where Murasame has disappeared to?" Shinobu asked his companion.

"I'm afraid I don't."

"Hm. I hope we can find him."

"Yeah."

Keno had been to many places looking for any clue that would lead them to the whereabouts of the missing crow. He even searched in the garbages hoping to find a black feather. He was too focused on his job that he did not noticed he was doing the job alone until he exhausted himself and asked Daikaku if they could rest for a minute only to receive silence. He turned around and saw that his companion was no longer with him. Little did he knew, Daikaku had split with him from the beginning and instead of helping, he went window shopping.

On the other hand Dousetsu dragged the stressed demon with him. "Come on! Get a grip. We have to look for that crow!"

"But..."

"You are just being a paranoid, Kabungo."

"I'm not! Shino is aniki's ideal wife!"

"What?" Dousetsu stopped, letting go of Kabungo's arm. "But, he's a guy."

"Yeah, and that's the problem!"

"Problem? I don't think there's a problem of Shino being a guy."

"Argh! Dousetsu, listen. Aniki's ideal woman is Shino, but Shino's a guy! What if aniki does something on him?"

"And that something is...?"

Kabungo stared at him and said, "... You are so slow, aren't you?"

"How so?"

"Ahh, never mind. Let's go."

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Genpachi sat on a chair beside the bed Shino was on reading the book he found on the night stand when he heard a heaving sound. He turned to Shino and closed the book immediately placing it back to where he found it and help the now awake boy.

"Are you alright?" he asked only to receive a coughing fit. "Wait here. I'll get you the medicines and water." Genpachi went out of the room to the kitchen to get water and medicine supplies then went back as soon as possible. He helped Shino sat and gave him the medicine for his cough and a glass of water.

"How are you feeling?" Genpachi asked the seemingly tired boy.

"I'm fine. Where's Sousuke and the others?"

"He's with them searching for the crow. The foxes are out, Kaname's with Dousetsu's sister, and Satomi is in a meeting." he answered.

"I see... So that makes the two of us." now that he mentioned it, Shino felt uncomfortable with Genpachi. Everytime he was with that man he felt awkward after Genpachi said he was his ideal woman.

"Yeah."

"Uhhh... Mind if I sleep?" Shino asked.

"Sure. Just rest in there and if you need anything just tell me. I'll be here by your side."

"Uh... Thanks...?"

"You're always welcome."

Shino rolled to the side, his back facing his only companion. He was not going to sleep really. He just wanted to escape the awkwardness and uneasy feeling he felt around the soldier.

4. CRASH

****+++_CRASH_+++****

****Writer's Corner****

Greetings everyone! Thank you for gracing me your time by reading this and for adding this to your favourites lists, alerts, and thanks for your reviews. I did not anticipate having so many people liking the story, which only have three chapters so far, but thanks a lot! It makes me happy. I also apologize for not updating last month, so I hope this time around we'll have the chapter four soon enough.

So, stay tuned because I will not abandon this no matter what even if it takes me so long before I completed this.

While waiting for the next chapter, you can check out my other stories.

****Respond to Reviews****

Well, there are so many reviews to make one by one reply so I'll put everything here in one.

Yes, Shino has a hard life since he was infant because of his illness, and I think it gotten worse this time around since he became immortal and his time froze, so poor Shino can't have a girlfriend.

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I was thinking of a scene whereâ€|you knowâ€|Genpachi and Shino are alone then the gang saw them did something, or what they thought they did, and Kabungo fainted or something like he goes nuts. Oh, and Genpachi saw Shino wearing a long violet wig and pink kimono and though he's a girl. Hehe.

And about Murasameâ€|yes, someone _crow- nap_ him, but can't tell who as of now. You guess it!

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5. Chapter 5

****Chapter Four: A Little Misunderstanding****

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><p>Stars filled the night sky like dots on a sheet of black paper, blinking every now and then. The night sky full of stars was a breathtaking view one must not miss. It was like, whenever you gazed at it, the problems seemed to dissolve and faded into black. It sent off a feeling of calmness and reassurance despite of the lurking danger at night.<p>

Genpachi sat on a chair next to Shino's bed that was still sound asleep. Shino hadn't woken up since the last time he did and he was not in a pretty good shape which worried Genpachi. He tried waking the boy in vain as the latter would keep on groaning in protest. It had been hours since then and Genpachi wondered if Shino would ever wake up for dinner.

"Hey." Said Genpachi in a low voice so as not to aggravate Shino. He reached for the boy's hair and brushed it aside before stroking his hair. He watched the boy before him. His eyes, gentle and soft, lingered on the boy's smooth- looking, fair, and flawless skin. He traced the lines that made up Shino's eyebrows, nose, and cheeks. Sometimes he wondered if God made a mistake in making Shino a boy because he did not look like it.

Genpachi sighed as he withdrew his hand and leaned his back on his chair, staring at the ceiling and looking back at Shino. He shook the boy's shoulder and said, "Shino, wake up. Dinner will be ready."

A groan.

"C'monâ€|" Genpachi almost whined. "You didn't eat lunch already. Are

you planning on skipping dinner, too?"

There was another groan before Shino's eyelids fluttered lazily, unravelling a pair of beautiful purple obs. He blinked a couple of times to adjust at the lightness of the room before turning to face Genpachi who was looking down at him.

"Hungry?" asked Genpachi.

Shino blinked again and nodded, but said, "Just give me two minutes."

"Okay."

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Shinobu dragged himself literally back to the manor with the rest of the gang, all were worn out and pretty exhausted.

"We found nothing." Said Daikaku in his usual tone.

"Yeah, thanks for stating the fact." Retorted Kabungo who was still worrying of his brother.

Dousetsu noticed the distress of his partner in the search, and so he asked, "Are you still thinking about the _two_?"

"Of course! What if my brother took advantage of Shino's fragility?"

Sousuke knew so well what Kabungo was worried of since he first witness it when Genpachi said Shino was his ideal woman while Keno, Dousetsu, Daikaku, and Shinobu were all oblivious of the predicament Kabungo had, but somehow they got a grasp of what was going on except Dousetsu.

"We're here!" exclaimed Shinobu in delight upon seeing the manor and miraculously felt energetic as he run off to it and Kabungo followed suit to check on Shino and his brother.

Sousuke sighed. "Finallyâ€|"

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Genpachi helped Shino get out of his bed and to his feet. Shino walked ahead with Genpachi tailing him as they both went out of the room and descended to the dining area. The purple haired boy sat in the table as Genpachi told him that he will get his meal.

"I want meat." Said Shino.

"Alright."

The dishes were already prepared by someone no one knew, so it did not take Genpachi too long to have Shino's food and placed it in front of him.

"Thanks, Genpachi!" he beamed. He was about to dig in when he suddenly felt nauseous. Covering his mouth, he pushed himself up, rattling the chair in the process and taking a few steps forward when he suddenly lost his balance and Genpachi caught him, but he too lost his balance when his foot accident tripped on Shino's and they both fell.

And that was the time when the search gang appeared and stared at the odd pair.

Keno whistled, gaining Shino's and Genpachi's attention.

"Oh, welcome back." Said the purple- eyed boy, unaware of the position he and the soldier was in.

"What're are you doing Shin?" asked Shinobu.

Sousuke averted his eyes somewhere and muttered, "Kabungo can go die now."

"Are you guys playing?" asked Dousetsu.

"That's almost a lethal position." Daikaku said his thoughts out.

And that was Shino's cue to see in what position they were in.

Shino was on top of Genpachi whose right hand looked like he was groping the boy's butt while the other hand held the boy's back so firm and so close to like the soldier was afraid to let go of the boy.

Shino blushed in embarrassment and wiggled himself off the man and Kabungo snapped.

"ANIKIIIIIII! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE NOW!?" cried Kabungo, grovelling.

"What? I did nothing _yet_"

"_YET!?!_ SO ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO IT LATER!?"

"Do what?" asked the still lying Genpachi with his elbow propped up to support himself.

"DON'T PLAY DUMB YOU PERVERT! I KNOW YOU DO! COME CLEAN ALREADY!" Kabungo kicked Genpachi's shin and the latter rolled over the

pain.

Shino in the other hand had been restraining himself from puking. The bitterness of bile was pushing itself up to his throat, making him gagged, but he did not want to let it out. Not until he reached the bathroom, however, his body would not move. The noises his friends were making only made his condition worse.

Sousuke was the first one who noticed the disoriented look of Shino, so he rushed to his side. Noticing this, Kabungo stopped berating his brother and they all surged toward Shino. They asked him if what was wrong or if needed anything, but poor Shino could not hear them clearly. Their voices were all muffled by an invisible thick wall, black spots accumulating in his vision, he was sweating cold, and his breath was ragged and short.

He could not understand them, but maybe they would understand him.

"Shino! What's happening!?" asked the frantic Sousuke.

"bathroom" replied Shino between gasps of air.

Without thinking twice, Sousuke carried Shino in his arms and went to the bathroom, leaving the gang behind to wait for them.

Sousuke did not know what to do next as he was panicking, but Shino's weak pushed of his hand against the older one's shoulder made him realized that the boy in his arms wanted to be put down, and so he did.

Shino kneeled in front of the bath tub, and there he throw up the bitter yellowish liquid. After a good minute of throwing up, Shino sighed in relief. He felt lighter than before. With a help from Sousuke, Shino cleaned his mouth and went back to eat his dinner with the rest of the group as he was feeling really hungry.

6. Chapter 6

****Chapter Five: Culprit's Identity and The Mysterious Woman****

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><p>In a secluded part of an unknown town stood an old, two-storey, white, octagon building at the middle of a small clearing surrounded by vast forest. The atmosphere that manifested in the area appeared to be calm at first glance, but the almost infinite tranquility sent off an unease feeling to one's heart. But, despite the dark aura hiding behind the fabrication of peace, the wild animals were living quite normally as though they could sense nothing wrong. However, for someone with keen eyes he would catch the amiss in the place.<p>

Due to the fabricated peace, a stray mouse made it inside the barrier that encircled the old building, alerting someone who lived inside who disregarded the fact that something had trespasses his property. But then again, he was quite dependent on the barrier that can detect unwanted visitor and can transport the said visitor to somewhere ten miles away.

"M'lady." Aoi, who kneeled on his right knee, spoke. Looking up, he asked, "What plan do you have for the crow?"

Before the man was an elegant chair for someone of royal blood on the riser, and from behind a woman in red cloak that had her face overshadowed by the hood emerged from a black curtain, and stood beside the chair. "I want it as my loyal pet, is all." the woman replied; her voice was cool and carried the tone of authority.

Aoi frowned at the response he received. He may be enemy for most of they eyes, but he was still apart of Shino's most trusted friend and brother figure, Sousuke, which only meant the he still cared for the boy. Wondering what the woman had in mind for Shino, he inquired, "What of Shino, M'lady?"

"You still care for that boy?" asked the woman, sitting on the chair.

There was hesitation on Aoi's face, but he answered nonetheless, "...Yes, M'lady." he whispered audibly as he looked down.

Had Aoi been still looking at the woman, he would have seen the smile that slowly morphed in the woman's face. A kind of smile that can only been seen from a mother longing for her child. "...I'm...quite relief to know that."

Hearing those words spoken from someone who could be a fiend of the Eight Dogs surprised Aoi, making him jerk his head back to the one he was serving. "Wha...what do you mean by that... M'lady..?"

"Hmmm?" tilting her head, she said, "I mean what I said. Anyway, you did a splendid job of getting my crow for me. As a reward, I'll give you the bead. However, not until I get back with him."

"Get him...?" repeated a confused Aoi.

"Yes." she nodded. "Him. I better go now. Or else, I might lose my chance."

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After the last night's incident and Kabungo nearly killed Genpachi, morning came at last, and Sousuke sat at the edge of the bed Shino was resting on.

Sousuke had been nursing Shino since last night, because the latter's condition had worsen up a notch, leaving the boy vulnerable. The young man watch his charge with gentleness in his eyes, suppressing his solemn expression. For him, it was as though he and Shino went back to when before the tragedy had happened, when Shino was given a limit in his life, which would not last much longer, and it only

worried Sousuke. What if they won't find Murasame on time? Never mind the bead. What would happen to Shino? He asked himself, getting worried.

"Sou..."

Sousuke was snapped out of his musings when heard Shino's weak voice. Focusing on the boy, he noticed how tired Shino was with half lidded eyes and pale complexion. Leaning forward, Sousuke caressed the boy's left cheek with his right hand gently and asked, "What is it? Are you in pain? Need something?" softly.

"No... I... Where's Murasame...? D'you found him yet?"

"I'm sorry, but not yet. But, don't worry yourself, Shino, they're on it already."

"Okay..." Shino trailed off as he dozed once again and fell asleep.

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Meanwhile, Satomi was glaring at the three persons upon entering his study. All he planned to do was read whatever was on his desk and work on it, and check his account so he could manage Shino's pocket money, and rest. However, the first thing that welcomed him were the three persons that he was currently glaring at as he leaned back on the couch,

"So...care to explain why my desk is in shambles and some of my things are broken?" asked Satomi and Dousetsu, Kaname, and Hamaji all spoke up together at the same time, making Satomi's foul mood worsened. Fed up, he bellowed, "SILENCE!" effectively silencing them. "Now, Dousetsu tell me the problem."

"Well, this GUY here-" Dousetsu stressed as he glared at Kaname who was standing to his right before glancing back at Satomi. "-was kissing my sister in an alley." he gritted his teeth.

"But, brother!" Hamaji, who was to Dousetsu's left, stomped her foot and indignantly said, "He's not kissing me!"

"That's right." Kaname nodded his head with his eyes closed and arms folded against his chest. "I'm merely whispering in her ear."

"And WHY are you whispering? And, on top of that, you were in the alley way with no other people passing by. That's suspicious enough." Dousetsu pointed out, which escalated to them bickering again until Satomi decided with a sigh to just drop the issues and ordered them to fix the room firmly, promising an unpleasant thing should they defy him, and left to check on Shino.

When Satomi reached Shino and Sousuke's shared room, he did not bother to knock as he simply opened the door and froze with wide eyes. He was stunned at what he saw, because in the bed lay an eighteen-year old Shino with Sousuke dressing the youngest who then paused and looked at their guardian, Satomi.

7. CRASH!

**Opps! Not a chapter...**

Note: Shame on me...it has been almost a year and I still keep you waiting for the next update. And now that you thought I finally updated, turns out I didn't. I just want you to know I'm not going to abandon this, and I'm sorry for not updating. It's just that...I write whatever I feel like to cuz it makes me connect with the stories I make. I've been sick, too...have recovered...and now I'm ill once again. You see, since last week starting sunday till friday I've been running around campus, which is as big as a village, and chasing events to cover because it was intramurals and I am one of the photojournalists in our uni. Ain't got time to rest, too until now that I overexhausted my self. Just gimme a little more time to clear my schedule cuz I can't write well when I have to think of my courses, too.

I think I'd be able to start the next chapter by next Saturday after the accreditation and before midterms. TT^TT I just hope I'd finish it soon.

Also, you are all so patient with me...I dunno how to say my thanks. :) Thank you!

Thanks for the faves and the followers... I read all your reviews and I am pleased. It motivates me to update much sooner!

8. Chapter 8

Chapter Six: She

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><p>"Sousuke..." called Satomi softly. The man he had called straightened up and faced him. "When did this happen?" he asked.<p>

"Just awhile ago." replied Sousuke.

Rounding the bed, Satomi sat beside the sleeping teen, Shino. He caressed the teen's face and the long, purple hair. Without tearing his gaze, he inquired, "How is he?"

Sousuke let out a sigh through his nose whilst trailing his gaze down to his left, and said, "He's fine...just a tad bit more tired."

"I see."

Silence engulfed the two men that were watching Shino sleep. It was comfortable, but that sensation did not last long as Sousuke gave off his uneasiness, which Satomi felt. However, instead of Satomi asking

or Sousuke speaking, they both came into a silent agreement to let the matter slide for now.

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The next day, the group of eight sans Shino and Sousuke started searching for the missing crow. They had already covered the town by late afternoon and yet they found no clues as to where Murasame was taken or anything that would lead them to it.

By the pond in a clearing within the woods the group stopped for a rest.

Shinobu crouched by the pond and stared on the still water, particularly his image. He pondered on the thought how younger he seemed to be than his actual age and thought of Shino. _Is he immortal? 'Cause he had been shot before and died, but then was revived by Murasame... Without the crow...what would happen? Will he die?_

Meanwhile, as the rest thought of plans, Genpachi thought of Shino. Contrary to what his companions were thinking, he was thinking of Shino beauty. _It doesn't matter if he's male._ He thought as he stood from his seat by the hollow of the tree and stared up at the setting sun with a longing look. Little did he know his brother was watching him with clear rage on his face that was matched by a throbbing vein on his forehead.

What the hell is with that look? Don't tell me he's thinking of Shino in an appropriate way!? I can't accept this! _I just can't!_ Kabungo screamed inwardly.

"Hm?" lying on his back beside the fuming Kabungo was Daikaku. He pushed his person up upon noticing something behind a bush nearby.

"What is it?" asked Keno, who was standing not far from Genpachi.

"I thought I've seen something move in there." said Daikaku, gaining the attention of everyone as they all walked toward him. Standing up and dusting his clothes, he spoke. "Well, it's probably a stray ani-"

"Help me please!" a woman's voice cut Daikaku's sentence as the men turned to where the voice originated and saw a bloodied and very pale woman crawling through the bush.

"GAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!" Shinobu, Kabungo, Dosetsu, and Keno screamed and hid behind Genpachi and Daikaku. "W-w-w-what is that?" asked a shaken Shinobu.

"Help...me...please." pleaded the woman, looking up.

"I think we should help?" Dosetsu suggested questioningly.

With a shrug, Daikaku went to pick the woman but was halted by Shinobu as he was grabbed by his arm. However, Daikaku was released reluctantly by Shinobu, who had an apparent frown, and continued on picking the worn out woman.

"Let's return to the manor." said Genpachi.

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"What's this?" asked Kaname upon seeing the group Satomi had dispatched to look for the missing crow. "You were task to search for Murasame and you returned with a woman."

"We're sorry...we couldn't find a trace of Murasame still." said Shinobu.

"We felt for this woman. She needs help." added Daikaku.

Sighing, Kaname opened the doors wider and let them all in. "Very, let me inform Satomi first. Meanwhile, you can bring that woman upstairs in one of the guest rooms. Preferably the farthest from Shino's room. And oh, before I forgot...no one is allowed to see Shino yet except for me, Sousuke, and Satomi."

"What?" Genpachi frowned and was about to say more when Kabungo stopped him by pulling his arm.

"We're going home!" yelled Kabungo as he rushed out with Genpachi.

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A door opening brought Satomi out of his focus on paperwork. Looking up in his desk, he saw Kaname walked in and stopped before him. "What is it?" he inquired.

"They're back..." said Kaname. "...but they brought someone with them."

"Oh?"

Kaname nodded. "Yeah. A woman. She looks filthy in her bloodied and tattered clothes. I told them to bring her in. What should we do?"

"Hm." Satomi leaned back on his chair's back rest and let out a breath in light fatigue. "I not expecting this. Hmmm...what should we do?... I think it would be good to welcome her in for now...attend to her needs, and then we can ask her things. From then on we could think of what we should do to her." he paused as he eyed Kaname. "But, I wish they didn't bring her here. I have this feeling that unsettles me since this early afternoon. Oh well..." Satomi shrugged and resumed his paperwork. "Prepare the dining area...have them in for dinner and tell Sousuke to make Shino's soup to dine in their room."

"Understood."

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Shinobu, Keno, Dousetsu, and Daikaku were already in the table, waiting for the rest. They had already cleaned up the woman they had found with the help of Hamaji, who was already back at her dormitory, and let the said woman rest.

Not long after they sat in the table, Kaname sauntered in the dining area together with Satomi who sat at the head of the table.

"Where're Shino and Sousuke?" asked Shinobu, noticing the persons that were not present in the table.

"Little Shino isn't feeling well." answered Kaname. _Though he isn't little anymore._ "He couldn't get out of bed, so he has Sousuke with him now."

"Will he be alright?" Daikaku asked Satomi.

"...For now...he is as fine as he could get. Though his health will deteriorate if Murasame isn't found soon." Satomi said.

"We'll find him." Keno told them with conviction and defiance in his eyes. "I swear we will."

Satomi glanced at them and saw that everyone all wanted the same thing...

To find Murasame as soon as possible.

I wonder who is that woman. I'd like to see her for myself. Was Satomi's lingering thought as they began to eat.

* * *

><p>Sorry for the delay... I was caught up with my midterms.
TT^TT I just finished typing this chapter.

****Oh... Yaniel, I live in the Philippines.****

9. Chapter 9

****Hello. It's been a while. I apologize for this much delay...this chapter took me more than two months to complete yet it is short. I have my valid reasons though. Apart from I have a life outside this site and couldn't write much recently, well I've been too busy with Christmas and New Year, and then second sem enrollment. And just last week I think I overdid myself and got sick on the first week of the semester. I know how painful waiting is, but it's worth the wait isn't it? I can't thank you enough for your extended patience.****

****About the Hakkenden anime, if I were not mistaken there is a season two. The ending is quite a cliffhanger.****

****As far as I understand, Satomi and Shino are siblings and the blonde woman manequin in the anime is the replica of their mother. Satomi had erased the memories of Shino about his family that's why when Shino saw the manequin he had felt something and Satomi had to take action. That's my theory based on 'reading between the lines' after watching anime.****

****Yaniel, I got this hunch that you're from the same country as me...turns out you really are. XD kababayan!****

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><p>Chapter Seven: Woman's Son

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><p>The day after the woman was found, the said person lied in bed. The afternoon rays filtered through the translucent curtains and caressed her pale face, slowly waking her up. The woman's eyes fluttered open, and revealed a pair of green eyes that was the shade of Shino. Seeing the window of the room, she slowly got up with her dark hair flowing behind. "Where am I?" she whispered whilst looking around before she made up her mind and went out of her room to wander around the mansion without knowing where to go. "This house is so huge and yet it seems no one's present. I have to thank the person who saved me from dying in the hands of wild teddy bears."<p>

"Really? Wild teddy bears." spoke a man from behind the woman, who got startled by the sudden voice.

Turning around, the woman saw Kaname leaning on the wall with his arms folded against his chest, eyes closed, and smile adorning his face.

"Uhm... Y-yes. We-were you the one who saved me, mister?" asked the woman.

Kaname pushed his person off the wall to face the woman formally. "No." he replied. "One of my friends did. I am Kaname, and you are?"

"M-Meiru. Meiru Yagashi."

"Pleased to meet you, Miss Meiru. I bet you are hungry?" the woman called Meiru nodded meekly. "Come on. We've prepared you something to fill your stomach."

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Sousuke helped Shino sat. He placed one large pillow behind his charge to lean on, and placed the tray on Shino's lap. "Here's some porridge, Shino." he said.

Shino sighed, blowing some hair that had gotten into his face. "Can you tie my hair please...Sou?" he asked.

"Of course." said Sousuke, turning to the chest of drawers and pulling the top drawer. He searched for a thing that could tie Shino's long hair and found a ring of rubber. He picked it up and went to tie Shino's hair. "Done." Sousuke informed Shino once he finished tying.

"Thank you." replied the purple-haired teen, and picked up his spoon to eat.

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Night time fell, and the men that kept searching for murasame were back in their homes. Each of them was frustrated of the outcome of their search. They even tried to find the missing bead, yet it was fruitless. They could not ask the right people for any possible information and lead. And, thinking of the enemy possessing both the bead and the raven scared them all because they had no idea who to look out for or what to anticipate for that made them blind to things that they should see in order to solve their problem.

Back at the mansion, however, Satomi was back from his errand. But then he was preparing to depart again.

"Take a close eye on Shino, Kaname." Satomi said as he packed some papers in his case, and added, "And a closer eye to that woman." as

he halted his task to stare at Kaname on a couch petting his huge white fox.

"Got it." replied Kaname, and watched the other man leave the room before sighing. "He's stress over his brother's health, don't you think so?" he mumbled to the fox that merely cracked an eye open to look at him.

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Meiru woke up. Her eyes that were glowing in the dark met the ceiling. She turned to the window and saw the full moon peeking in through it. Pushing her person up, Meiru pulled the blankets and got out of bed. She made her way out of the room, opening and closing the door behind her as quietly as it could, and she walked aimlessly in the hallways until she stopped in front of a closed door.

The woman grabbed the doorknob and turned it to open the door with a soft click. She stepped inside whilst pulling the door closed. In the room, Meiru found two beds occupied by two person. She went to the one by the window and looked down on the sleeping teen, Shino.

A smile then morphed on Meiru's face; a smile that could match a woman who found something she had lost and had been searching for so long.

"I finally found you...my son." Meiru whispered as a tear escaped from her right eye and cascaded down her cheek.

End
file.